

VZCZCXRO4749
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHMD #2334 2581629
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 151629Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0772
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 002334

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR AND NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [USUN](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [EU](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN SEES ENGAGEMENT WITH SYRIA AS NECESSARY

REF: STATE 150032

Classified By: CDA Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) In a Sept. 13 meeting with MFA Director General for Middle East Alvaro Iranzo, PolCouns discussed reftel points on Syria, stressed that the United States strongly discourages high-level contacts with the SARG and made clear that the USG is not asking third parties to deliver any messages on its behalf. DCM reviewed points with Spanish National Security Advisor Carles Casajuana Sept. 14 during their initial meeting. MFA DG Iranzo said that Spain and many other EU members see increasingly close Syrian contacts with Iran as a new, negative development that requires a "new reading" of the situation and engagement with Syria to try to decouple Damascus from Tehran.

12. (C) Iranzo said that while Syria,s performance has been dismal on many of the UNSC,s demands, there are a few positive elements. Iranzo claimed that even the Israeli government acknowledges that not one shot has been fired from Syria into Israel for 25 years. He said that re-engagement with Syria is necessary to ensure the stabilization of Lebanon in accordance with UNSCR 1701 and to prevent Hizbollah from re-arming, as well as to resolve the Sheba,a farms question and to secure the release of kidnapped Israeli soldier Shalit. Furthermore, he said, Spain wants to have contacts with Syria now that it is sending 1200 troops to UNIFIL near the Syrian border. He said the GOS also heard from Lebanese President Siniora during FM Moratinos, recent trip about the need for such dialogue. Iranzo added that "all the Arabs" are saying that Syria will continue in Iran,s orbit - however "against nature" it is for Syria to be in line with Shi,ite Iran - unless something is done about it. Iranzo cited all of these as reasons to engage without retreating from our shared goals, and claimed this thesis is gaining ground in the EU. Iranzo said that while the results of dialogue had been very disappointing, the toughest approach - Israel,s incursion - had not succeeded in getting rid of Hizbollah, with 250 Katyushas launched at Israel on the very last day of the conflict making this point very graphic. This meant that not engaging Syria at higher levels would have little impact.

13. (C) Iranzo stressed that Spain,s contacts with Syria, such as FM Moratinos, recent "technical stop" in Damascus, would continue, but he said that they represent a limited dialogue in which Spain adheres fully, "with no nuance or deviation," to the message of the international community for Syria to comply fully with UNSCRs 1559, 1680 and 1701, which call on Syria to disarm Hizbollah, secure the border with Iraq, stop interfering in Lebanon, and comply with the Hariri assassination investigation.

14. (C) Spanish National Security Advisor Casajuana echoed these points briefly in response to DCM,s intervention. He said that while Spain is well aware of Syria's worsening behavior and is very dissatisfied, the GOS sees no better alternative leadership in Syria to Assad. Casajuana noted that having the Islamic movement in power would clearly be worse for all of us. For this reason, the GOS believes there is a need to maintain a level of dialogue with the senior leadership of the Syrian government. Like Iranzo, Casajuana insisted that Spain finds it necessary, with troops close to the Syrian border to have some lines of communication with the SARG, even while insisting on full Syrian compliance with UNSCRs. Casajuana said that Spain would be willing to deliver any messages the USG wanted to pass on to the Syrians. DCM reiterated that the US is neither authorizing nor seeking third parties to convey messages to the Syrians.

Visit Embassy Madrid's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/madrid/>

LLORENS